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## LABOR IN THE PACKING INDUSTRY

Of the thirty thousand laborers at work in the Union Stock Yards of Chicago, twenty thousand are unskilled. The total thirty thousand means workers employed in the packing-houses as butchers, helpers, and those who cure and handle by-products directly. It does not include office help, nor men employed in handling live-stock for the Stock Yards Company. Most of the unskilled laborers reside on the west and southwest sides of the Yards. They have grouped themselves largely according to nationalities.

One does not have to walk many steps from the University Settlement in the Stock Yards district to find prototypes of the characters in Upton's Sinclair's *Jungle*. Nevertheless, the packers deny the inference to be drawn from Sinclair's description for the same reason that southerners in general resent the indictment implied in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The filth and bad odors surrounding the wretched laborers who crawl in the hide and hog cellars cannot easily be exaggerated, but it is a far cry from the animal life of many of the Lithuanian and Slovak workers to the manner of living that obtains among the Bohemian "aristocracy." For a considerable fraction of the Stock Yards employees labor conditions are bad, but the home-life of those same workers is even worse. To one used to the American standard of living it may seem incredible that human beings can become adjusted to such surroundings. The fact, however, that these people live in just such conditions at even less cost in other parts of the world is the fundamental difficulty encountered in any attempt at a solution of the Stock Yards labor problem. These laborers are living the life and maintaining the social and economic standards to which they are wonted. To lift them out of their present degradation is a matter not so much of wages, as of education.

The district immediately surrounding the packing-houses has been the scene of a constant shifting of its population. Before

1890 the section north of Forty-seventh Street and west of Ashland Avenue was inhabited by Irish and German families that then represented almost the only laborers in the Yards. Nearly all these people came from other parts of Chicago. For a time they lived in comparative isolation, and seldom went back and forth into the main part of the city owing to the ten-cent street-car fare which was then charged from this district. Bohemian workers joined the Irish and Germans at an early date, and these were followed by the Poles. With the advent of the latter peoples the Germans and Irish began to move out of the old district and establish homes farther south, toward Fifty-first street. Later, when the Lithuanians and Slovaks began pouring in from southern Europe, the Bohemians and many of the Poles likewise moved southward. This induced the Germans and Irish to press on in the van, each in their direction, leaving the territory between Forty-seventh and Fifty-first streets to the Bohemians and Poles. The southern Europeans are grouped mainly according to nationalities, the Lithuanians and Slovaks being west of Ashland Avenue, while the Galicians and a few Slovaks are on the east side. These, with the Bohemians and the Poles, constitute the bulk of the Stock Yards laborers at the present time. The dirtiest work within the packing-houses, such as that done in the fertilizing departments and in the hide and pork cellars, is done mainly by Lithuanians and Slovaks.

Work within the packing-houses, and especially in the cattle-killing departments, is graded variously from sixteen to fifty cents an hour. Most of the laborers begin work at the lower figure, and some are advanced gradually to better-paid jobs. The floormen and splitters are the highest-paid laborers on the cattle-killing floor, but comparatively few of those who work up from the lower ranks can split or aim to become splitters. The ambition of most of the men is to become floormen. How to reach this goal was a comparatively simple matter so long as the policy of the butchers' union was enforced in the packing-houses. Since the collapse of the union in 1904, however, no definite system of promotion has prevailed. A personal friend of the foreman, or one of his own nationality, is now apt to be

chosen for a better job, in preference to the man who formerly might have laid claim to such a position by virtue of seniority in rank.

In all grades of work it is obvious that each laborer is anxious to get the place of the one just a little above himself in rank and wages. This universal desire for the next man's job makes each laborer fear lest he be superseded by the one next below. A sense of insecurity thus prevails all along the line. Even the man getting sixteen cents an hour knows that there are unemployed men at the gate who would be willing to take his work if they could get it. This conflict in interests between laborers is nowhere more clearly brought out than where the system of "go-betweens" prevails. A "go-between" is one whose time is divided between different grades of work. The employer may not have enough men to do all the work graded forty cents an hour. Still, perhaps, the extra work is not sufficient to give an additional man full time. The employer may then have some laborer from the lower ranks work part time at the forty-cent rate and the remaining time at cheaper grades of work. In the meantime this "go-between" learns the forty-cent job. The other laborers working full time at the forty-cent rate now fear this man more than anyone else. They know that his chances to get one of their places are better than those of any of the laborers in the rank immediately below their own, since he is rapidly learning their trade. This explains, too, why the butchers' union was opposed to the go-between system.

Promotion is, of course, impossible in any event unless the laborer has opportunity to acquire the necessary training. The go-between system serves this purpose, but only a small fraction of the Stock Yards laborers are thus enabled to fit themselves for higher grades of work. While a few of the more aggressive workers may become fairly proficient in some new line of work by repeated practice during spare moments, the larger number of those who are advanced fit into the plan that prevails among the splitters. There are two classes of splitters: the main splitters and the neck splitters. Any strong man can do the work in the latter class. Skill as well as strength is needed by the main

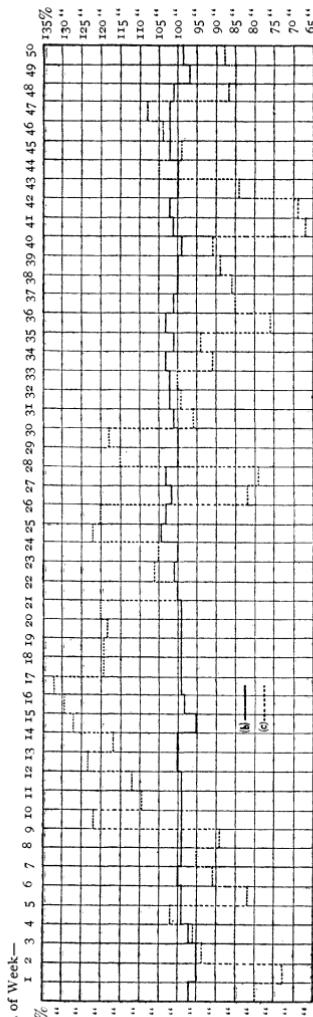
splitters, however. When the foreman wants to put in a new main splitter, he usually turns the beginner over to one of the old workmen, and the latter is then supposed to give the necessary instruction and aid, and be responsible for the results of the work. The old splitter generally tells the new man to take only the smaller animals at first and to quit as soon as the line of splitting is off the center of the back bone. In such cases the old splitter must finish up the work, covering up the defect, if there shall be any, as well as he can. The apprentice does not get the wage of a splitter during his period of apprenticeship, but is paid the wage he received while at his former job. When he has practiced on the smaller animals until he can split them safely, he tries the larger ones. It is common to hear splitters say: "There is a world of difference in bullocks." Even after a man can split the largest animals correctly, he is not given the full wage immediately. Deduction is made from this for a time so as to make up for the mistakes made during the period of apprenticeship.

Many of the laborers would be satisfied to work even though there were no prospect of promotion, provided the hours of work were reasonably steady. As it is, Monday and Saturday are, as a rule, only half-days. In the middle of each week the men have often to work overtime. Steadiness of employment also varies with the time of the year, the summer season being usually slack. Even though a man may get a good hourly wage, therefore, his pay for the week may be small, since the weekly time is often only forty hours.

The following table, showing weekly changes from June 24, 1905, to June 9, 1906, in (a) average weekly time, in hours, worked by the cattle-butchers, (b) the number of employees each week among cattle-butchers, represented as a percentage of the average weekly number for the year, and (c) the total number of hours worked each week by all the cattle-butchers, represented as a percentage of the average weekly number of hours worked by all the cattle-butchers, has been worked out from the pay-rolls of one of the large packing-houses. In the accompanying diagram the curves plotted are based upon columns (b) and (c).

EMPLOYMENT OF CATTLE-BUTCHERS IN THE STOCK YARDS,  
 JUNE 24, 1905, TO JUNE 9, 1906

No. of Week	(a) Hours	(b) Per Cent.	(c) Per Cent.
1	30	97	80
2	32	95	73
3	38	95	94
4	42	97	96
5	40	99	102
6	32	99	82
7	35	100	91
8	38	99	95
9	35	99	89
10	37	99	122
11	48	99	109
12	43	99	112
13	43	100	123
14	48	100	117
15	47	95	127
16	50	98	129
17	51	99	132
18	52	99	119
19	48	99	119
20	47	99	118
21	46	99	120
22	46	100	100
23	38	101	106
24	41	100	105
25	37	104	122
26	31	103	120
27	30	102	82
28	44	103	79
29	45	100	115
30	36	100	118
31	37	101	96
32	31	102	99
33	38	102	100
34	34	103	91
35	36	101	94
36	30	103	76
37	33	101	85
38	34	100	86
39	34	100	89
40	35	99	91
41	30	101	67
42	27	102	69
43	32	100	84
44	40	100	105
45	38	102	99
46	40	102	104
47	41	102	108
48	33	101	87
49	34	97	85
50	34	99	88



The irregularity thus made apparent is seen to be, not in the number of men hired at different times of the year, but rather in the amount of work done. This irregularity in employment

has been an important factor in promoting intemperance among the Stock Yards laborers. While these men, as a group, and especially those from southern Europe, are very heavy drinkers, the evil has, no doubt, been aggravated because of the idle time forced upon the laborers. The packers, too, deplore the evil of unsteadiness in employment, but declare that conditions inherent in the industry, the great shipments of cattle on Mondays and Thursdays, and the wide variations in supply at the different seasons of the year, are the causes of the irregularity.

It will be noted that neither the table nor the chart takes account of the daily fluctuations in employment within the week mentioned above, which are perhaps fully as mischievous and demoralizing as the seasonal changes.

To those laborers who are accustomed to irregular times for work before coming to the Stock Yards the evils may not seem so great. This is especially true of the Lithuanians and Slovaks, because of certain habits and customs that prevailed among them in their native provinces, to which they cling long after their advent to this country. The average number of holidays observed by these people indicates that they are accustomed to considerable irregularity in their habits of work. When a wedding is celebrated, the guests prolong the festivities, amid drinking and dancing, for a week. Three or four days are devoted to each funeral. At least a week, and sometimes two, is set aside each summer to a yearly celebration known as the *kalvreea*. If we include the large number of religious holidays and the customary fifty-two Sundays, and make a conservative estimate of the average number of weddings and funerals attended by men of the class employed in the packing-houses, we find that 125 out of the 365 days of the year, or over one-third of the time, is thus occupied.

It has been noted above that the people maintaining the lowest standard of living in the Stock Yards district live in just such conditions at even less cost in other parts of the world, and that this is the initial cause of whatever difficulty any attempt toward the solution of the Stock Yards labor problem presents. Let us examine the evidence furnished by a study of Lithuanians

and Slovaks of the class that prevails in the packing industry. None of these own land in their native country. All have served as hired help for farm labor. Until within four or five years, such men received from twenty to thirty rubles (about ten to fifteen dollars), including board and clothes, for a year's work in their home districts. A hired girl's wages would be ten rubles, or about five dollars a year, including board and clothing. The board afforded these people is easily described. Breakfast, which was their heavy meal, consisted of one of the following dishes: mashed potatoes and lard, or barley flour mush, or chopped beets boiled with salt pork, or sauerkraut and salt pork, or on some occasions other meat. Black rye bread would be served with one of the above. At noon they received soup from greens or from potatoes and a little flour. At the evening meal they were given either potato or barley soup. Meat was seldom forthcoming at the noon or evening meals. All their clothing was home-made and made by hand. They wore shoes on Sundays and holidays only. On work days a leather sole, called a *nagenes*, bound to the foot by means of home-made linen strings, was worn by men and women alike. The farm-houses were one story buildings containing from three to five rooms. None of the floors were made of wood, but were simply a hardened clay. These houses would have to accommodate the farmer and his wife and children (six on the average), and from one to three hired girls; also from one to three hired men where these were not required to sleep in the barn. These laborers saved nothing from their wages. What little money they received was spent in a sociable way at the various festivities. There was no inducement to save, and nothing in which they could invest their small earnings.

People accustomed to such a standard of living in their home country are the kind who supply the major part of the poorest-paid labor in the Stock Yards. While now working at sixteen cents an hour or less, they are able to lay by a large portion of their earnings, even though they live more expensively than they could have thought of doing in their native country. It is customary for these men to board in groups at the home of one

of their countrymen. The landlady buys provisions at the grocery and meat-market for each of the boarders separately, and a separate book account is kept for each of the men at the store for such purchases. Each boarder pays his own book account at the store, and pays the landlady for preparing the meals, and for his lodging and washing. The average monthly expense is nine dollars on the book account, three dollars and fifty cents to the landlady, and three dollars or more per month for beer, a pint of which is consumed at each noon meal, and another in the evening. All the laborers buy both meat and beer—the food and drink they most enjoy. They could never have indulged in such high living in their native country, and they have all been accustomed before entering the Stock Yards district to living in crowded quarters.

One new experience, however, comes to them after having worked a while in the packing-houses. They see money coming in at a rate they have never witnessed before. They translate their wages into the coins of their native country, and then the amount seems fabulous. Now for the first time they feel they are getting something worth saving. Moreover, there is an opportunity to invest money in real estate, and this appeals to many of the laborers. They have the opportunity to buy a lot on an easy payment plan—only fifteen dollars down, perhaps, and the rest in small instalments which their wages will permit them to meet. Those who are not interested in making an investment look forward to the time when they can take the savings of two or more years with them back to their native country. The writer knows of one laborer, who was among the lowest-paid men in the Stock Yards, who had accumulated two hundred dollars within a period of two years.

The Slovak and Lithuanian girls working in the packing-houses at the low wage of five dollars a week also save a considerable fraction of their income. These girls do not live according to American standards, and could not under the circumstances. By doing their own washing and preparing their own meals to a large extent, they do not have more than half the living expenses of the men. They never exceed six dollars

per month in their book account, and pay their landlady two dollars, making a total of eight dollars per month.

Comparatively few of these people complain about their conditions. On the other hand, if any outsider speaks deprecatingly of their standard or shows signs of pity for their lot, they will often resent it.

These people have their own societies and clubs, and all belong to the same church. It is very difficult for an outsider to gain their confidence. Such a privilege is limited to those of their own nationality, and especially to their priest. The writer called on one influential priest, and was met with the curt reply: "Very busy." The offer was made to call later at some time that would better suit the priest's convenience. Without even knowing the purpose of such a visit, he wheeled about and walked into another room, ejaculating as he went, "Busy all the time! Busy all the time!"

The members of his "flock," too, are "busy all the time." But their state of being busy is essentially static. The only dynamic force they themselves inject into their society is increase of population. Changes tending to better their conditions have invariably come from the outside. Packers regard the present standard of living of these people as an improvement over earlier conditions to which the laborers have been accustomed. Settlement workers make personal visits to the various hovels, and try to instil habits of cleanliness and decency. It is largely due to their influence that public baths, play-grounds, and reading-rooms have been placed in close proximity to the children of the Stock Yards laborers. And these children respond to the new and better environment thus afforded. It is a pleasure to see how they rise to higher planes of living. They are not willing to take jobs like those of their parents, and the restlessness thus made manifest is the most encouraging sign we have for their future. Another external force brought to bear on conditions of Stock Yards laborers is that of the butchers' union. To a study of this, attention is now directed.

In the fall of 1896 the American Federation of Labor was

asked to issue a call to local unions of butchers to send delegates to the next annual convention of the federation, for the purpose of organizing an international union of butchers. Five local unions were represented at the Cincinnati convention—two from packing-houses in Kansas City, two meat-cutters from New York state, and one representative from the general organization of Boston. The delegates thus assembled in convention drafted the constitution for the International Union of Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America. All other local unions of butchers directly chartered by the American Federation of Labor were now obliged to take out a charter from this new international organization. The date of organization was January 26, 1897.

The main purpose in thus forming an international union was to get uniformity, as far as possible in the wages and conditions of labor among cattle-butchers in the different localities. The lack of uniformity is evident when we compare conditions at different packing centers. Thus, in Milwaukee, even now, butchers get only 50 per cent. of the wages paid in Chicago. The most highly skilled butchers in Milwaukee receive only twenty-five cents per hour. Only one man out of the two thousand in the packing business gets three dollars per day. In New York, on the other hand, the lowest weekly wage paid to cattle-butchers in packing-houses is eighteen dollars per week. The average wage received by a highly skilled butcher is forty dollars per week. The men are paid according to the piece-work system, but their speed is, on the average, no greater than that which obtains in the Chicago Stock Yards. A difference may be noticed, too, in the arrangement of the work. In New York, where kosher meat is prepared, the division of labor is not carried out so minutely as in Chicago. Thus, the floorman, who removes the hide from the side of the animal, is also feld-cutter and cuts open the animal. The cattle-finisher must be able to rump the back and split, combining the kind of work done by four different specialists in the large houses in Chicago. Attention has been called to this lack of uniformity by the international union through the medium of its national officials. These

officials are a president, secretary-treasurer, and five vice-presidents, all of whom together constitute the international executive board. Similarly, each local union has a president, vice-president, corresponding and financial secretary, recording secretary, treasurer, and sergeant-at-arms, and these local officers constitute the local executive board.

When the local unions were first organized, only skilled men were admitted. The organizations of unskilled workmen began to be formed in 1902. At the time of the strike in 1904, when the international union included fifty-six thousand members, 50 per cent. of the membership was unskilled. The strike brought about a complete collapse of the unions of unskilled workers. Since then the packers have refused to enter into any agreement with these men. Previously, for a period of over a year, the packers at all the packing centers had been bound by an agreement with the unskilled workers. That is the only period in the history of the butchers' union when the packers have been willing to deal with the unskilled workers as a body.

Today the membership of the butchers' union is only one-half what it was in 1904. It consists of skilled workers only, except in cities like Baltimore, Cincinnati, Louisville, Ky., and Evansville, Ind., where half the membership is unskilled. In these four cities, it may be noted, the unskilled workers are employed in independent packing-houses outside of the "big six."

When the international union was organized, it was decided to hold conventions annually. Since 1900, however, the meetings have been biennial. Each local union sends delegates to the international conventions. The representation has changed from time to time to suit the growth of the organization, until at present each local is entitled to one delegate for the first two hundred members or fractional part thereof, and one additional delegate for each additional five hundred members or major fractional part thereof. These delegates serve merely at the convention to which they are elected. The seat of government has been fixed at Syracuse, N. Y., and it is required that "the president or secretary-treasurer of the international organization shall reside

in the city where the general office is located. Any change of headquarters shall be left to the decision of the international executive board."

The executive board is the supreme power of the international union.<sup>1</sup> If matters are placed before the secretary-treasurer or president, and these officials do not see fit to decide the matter independently, they submit it to the executive council, and final decision is rendered by a majority vote of that body. The members of the first international executive council received no salary, and continued their respective trades in packing-houses or meat-markets. The secretary-treasurer became a salaried official in 1899, and the president in 1900. These two officials have since then devoted all their time to official work.

Since 1904 the international union has provided for death benefits. Up till that time death benefits were maintained by nearly all the local unions. These abolished it when the work was taken up by the international union. The members of local unions pay thirty cents per month to the international body. Of this, fifteen cents goes to the general-expense fund, ten cents to the strike fund, and five cents to the death fund. A fifty-dollar death benefit is paid where the deceased has been a member of good standing for six months. This sum is increased to one hundred dollars if the deceased had been member for a year, and to one hundred and fifty dollars where the membership was three years. The total amount of strike benefits paid out by the union exceeds one hundred thousand dollars.

The membership of a local union usually consists of laborers of some one department. Where the departments are small, as in some of the smaller cities, several may unite to form a mixed local. In Chicago a few of the meat-cutters' local unions have been organized according to nationalities, such as the Bohemian meat-cutters, Hebrew meat-cutters and German sausage-makers. The members of local unions pay an entrance fee and monthly dues. Among the Chicago unions it has been found impossible to compel members to attend the regular meetings of the locals.

<sup>1</sup> Appeal to the union body as a whole has been made possible through the adoption of the initiative and referendum.

In many other cities, however, a fine is imposed where a member is absent from more than two consecutive meetings without reasonable excuse. The meetings are usually held twice a month. Each member is provided with a due-book, which is stamped when the monthly dues are paid. Before a member can gain admittance to any meeting he must give the pass-word, and also show that his due-book is stamped up to date. Qualifications for membership are passed on by an investigating committee.

Each union has its house or shop committee, which consists of three members elected semiannually. It is the duty of this committee to hear grievances presented either by members of the union or by the representative of the company. Wherever the committee finds itself unable to settle the matter presented, it is either referred to the local executive council or brought before the local union at its next meeting. In practice such matters are usually presented at a meeting of the local union. The house committee always consists of laborers in the craft represented by the union. Inasmuch as a union includes within its department several branches of work, care is usually taken to have the different forms of work represented in the committee. The committee members receive no pay for their services. Any laborer who is unable to get a fair hearing before the house committee can report to the business agent, who in turn would report at the next meeting of the local union. The committee are then asked to clear themselves of the charge made, and, if unable to do so, are discharged, and a new committee is appointed. Although semiannual elections are held, the committee members are usually re-elected so as to serve year after year. The bulk of the work is generally left to the chairman of the committee. He settles many of the questions that arise, and calls in the other members of the committee for only the more important matters.

Nearly every local union has a business agent.<sup>2</sup> It is his duty to collect the regular dues, solicit membership, secure the signature of employers to contracts and agreements where such exist, and try to unionize shops not thoroughly unionized. The

<sup>2</sup> In 1904 Chicago had twenty-six local unions and eighteen business agents.

business agent is expected to devote all his time to such work. He is the only salaried official in the local union. His wages vary from twenty dollars to twenty-seven dollars and fifty cents per week. Most of his work now consists in collecting dues and trying to get new members. The office of the business agent was established at the Cleveland convention in 1900. The business agents have often been men who were ignorant as to conditions of the labor movement as a whole. Nevertheless, they have been thoroughly familiar with the work performed in their own departments. Many of these men have realized that they wielded power in their control of labor, and have often used such power to advance their own individual interests.

In section 4, Article IV, of the constitution of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America we read:

In any locality covering a radius of twenty miles or less, where there are three or more local unions of Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen, there shall be formed a Packing Trades Council; but no local union shall be eligible to affiliation therewith, excepting such local unions as are chartered by the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America.

The above section is the revised form as adopted in May, 1904. In 1901 it was intended to limit membership to those unions chartered by the international organization, but it was not so specified at the time. Shortly after the council was first established, unions of coopers, firemen, engineers, and others who applied for admission were taken in. These continued to hold their seats until the revision of the constitution of the international union in the spring of 1904. The first packing-trades council was organized in Chicago in August, 1901. Other councils were organized soon afterward in New York City, Kansas City, South Omaha, St. Joseph, East St. Louis, and San Francisco. All of these continued to exist until after the strike in 1904. Those in New York City and Chicago have been active until the present time. The latter included in its membership, at one time, all the local unions in the city connected with the meat industry, except the teamsters' union. The aim and purpose in

organizing such a council was to bring the local unions into close touch with each other, so as to make the grievance of one the concern of all; also, to further movements which could not be advanced by the local unions separately.

The packing-trades council is made up of delegates from the different local unions eligible to membership. For the first one hundred and fifty or less number of members each union has a representation of two delegates, and for each additional one hundred and fifty members one additional delegate. These delegates serve for a period of one year. Meetings of the council are held at least twice a month.

As originally organized in 1901, each packing-trades council had a president, vice-president, recording secretary, financial and corresponding secretary, who also acts as business agent, a treasurer, sergeant-at-arms, three trustees, and an executive board of five members. Last May the international executive council ordered a change in the number of officials within the packing-trades councils both in New York City and Chicago. The office of president was abolished, and in his place a temporary chairman is now to be selected at each meeting of the council. While the other officers served for one year previously, they are now to be elected every six months. Questions of jurisdiction arising between locals are no longer determined by the packing-trades council, but are decided exclusively by the international executive board. The packing-trades council had in many localities assumed the function of the international executive board, and this is why the powers of the former body were curtailed. Shortly after the defeat of the butchers in the strike of 1904, all the packing-trades councils, except the two in New York City and Chicago, were disbanded. This followed as a result of the packers' refusal to have any further dealings with the officials of these bodies. It may be noted that the present packing-trades councils are found in two cities where there are independent packing-houses neither owned nor controlled by the "big six" companies. Moreover, in all those cities where the packing-trades councils have ceased to exist (except on the Pacific coast), the stock yards and packing-houses are all owned by some or all of the "big six" companies.

In 1902 and 1903 the union through its house committees arranged a definite system of promotion for laborers. Thus, the man who began work by raising gullets would become a foot-skinner, and he in turn could become a leg-breaker. The last-named could be advanced to the position of a feld-cutter. The next higher step was the work of the rumper. Above this again was the work of the floorman; and, as already mentioned, the ambition of most of the men is in the direction of this job.

According to the union regulations as enforced in 1902 and 1903, a vacancy in any of the ranks would be filled by the oldest in employ from the rank next below, provided the union did not have among its unemployed one who was a specialist in such work. The plan of promoting according to seniority in employment was rigidly followed by the union; but if the man thus promoted could not fill the place, he would have to yield to the next in rank. From 1901 to 1904 a boy could rise from one grade to the next, but no one was permitted to skip any of the grades of work; that is, no boy raising gullets or breaking legs, for example, would be permitted to become floorman directly, but had to rise gradually from job to job. There was a while when it might happen that a laborer working as leg-breaker would at odd times practice on the work of a floorman. In a short time such a laborer might go to some other city and hire out as floorman. In order to prevent this, the cattle-butchers' union, with the sanction of the international organization, established a system of transfer cards, 1901. These cards were issued to members of the union desiring to go to some other city, and showed the kind of work the owner had been doing and in what line of work he was proficient. These transfer cards were issued by the secretary of the local union, but the local shop or house committee was judge of what should go on the card. A laborer seeking employment in a packing-house of some other city would have to show his transfer card to the house committee in the department where he sought work, and they would determine the grade of work to which he was eligible.

Again, if a certain gang were needed by the packers in their busy season, it was the policy of the union to compel the packers to retain the same number of men in slack seasons. The packers

thought it better to lay off some men in the slack season and so give to the others full time. The union, on the other hand, insisted that all should be retained, even though none got full time during the slack season. They held that this was not only the more humane plan, but that it was the better way from a business view-point. Their argument was that the price of labor is not fixed by the man at work, but by the man at the gate. More men would be at the gate during slack seasons if the packers were permitted to carry out their policy, and the standard of wages would be lowered accordingly.

The policy of the butchers' union in its relation to the principle of the closed shop, the union label, the minimum wage, entrance fees, and the boycott, may also be noted briefly. No closed-shop agreement was made or carried out in any packing-house in America until in the spring of 1906. At that time the companies and employees in all the packing-houses in Evansville, Ind., and in nearly all the packing establishments in Louisville, Ky., agreed to abide by the union-shop agreement. This agreement provides that the packers shall employ in their establishments only union men, or men who are willing to become union men. The unions have also prepared a union stamp, which they try to have placed on all meats sold by their employers. Some employers, friendly toward the union and even bound by the union-shop agreement, are nevertheless unwilling to adopt the use of such a stamp, because they claim the large packing companies will then invade their market, purposely undersell them, and drive them out of the business. This objection to the use of the union stamp was mentioned recently by large packing firms in Evansville, Ind.; and the same difficulty was pointed to four years ago by Mr. Jacob Dold, when he was asked to adopt the union label in the Dold packing-houses at Buffalo, N. Y., Kansas City, and Wichita, Kan.

While no union shop agreement existed in any packing house until last May, the same has been in force among the meat-cutters ever since the formation of the international union in 1897. All retail markets that become unionized must adopt a union-shop agreement. Such markets are provided with a

union market card, which certifies that the meat-market is conducted in accordance with the rules of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America, American Federation of Labor. The card is not to be placed in any market without the permission of the international union, and may be removed by them at the discretion of the international secretary-treasurer. The rules for the union meat-market provide that all employees shall be union men, or willing to become union men. They also provide that the employers shall abide by a uniformly established time for closing the markets, which in most cases includes strict Sunday closing. When conferences were first held between the international union and the meat-dealers' associations in the East, it was agreed that the daily hours should be from 6 A. M. to 7:30 P. M. This working-day has been gradually reduced, until now the markets open at 7 A. M. and close at 6 P. M. in all the union markets in the East. Through the influence of the international union, a bill was introduced into the legislature of the state of New York, providing for Sunday closing of all meat-markets, and making it a criminal offense to sell, expose for sale, or deliver any fresh or salt meats or meat products. The measure was bitterly fought by the Hebrew meat-dealers, even the Jewish unions opposing the measure. The bill was passed, and has been declared constitutional by the courts.

In Syracuse, Utica, Albany, Rochester, and other cities in the state of New York, the meat-cutters' union has arranged with the employers for a minimum wage of twelve dollars per week for meat-cutters. This does not affect the wages paid the apprentices or delivery boys employed in these establishments. In this connection it will be remembered that the demand by the butchers' union for a minimum wage for unskilled labor in the packing-houses was what provoked the great strike of 1904.

The attitude of the union toward unfair goods is reflected in the position taken by the American Federation of Labor. The latter body has sanctioned the publication in its official journal of the names of companies that are deemed unfair in their attitude toward organized labor. Such names are included in a list

under the caption "We Don't Patronize," and may be seen in any copy of the *American Federationist*. This journal also publishes the names of those companies that arrange a settlement with the federation. If any packing-house is deemed unfair toward the butchers' union, arrangement will be made with the federation to have such a company included in the above-mentioned list. Whenever the American Federation of Labor indorses the publication of a company on the unfair list, organized labor everywhere is officially notified not to patronize any business houses using the products of the unfair company. When this system of boycott was first established, the list published was very large. At the convention of the federation held three years ago, the provision was so modified as to limit the numbers of names published. Thus,

an international union is not allowed to have published the names of more than three firms at any one time. Similar course is followed when application is made by a local union directly affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. Directly affiliated local unions are allowed the publication of but one firm at any one time.

When a boycott is levied on some meat company, and this is indorsed by the American Federation of Labor, all local unions are notified to that effect. The products of the unfair firm cannot thereafter be handled in any of the union meat-markets. The union card would be removed from any shop handling the goods of the boycotted company.

The regulations of the butchers' union with reference to the use of initiation fees afford interesting comparison with those of the Packing House Teamsters' Union of Chicago. The latter union charges a fee of twenty-five dollars to all applicants for membership. To that union body it is a paying proposition to have old members drop out and new members come in, as this affords an important source of revenue. In contrast with this notice the regulation passed at the last convention of the international union of butchers. It was decided that

members in good standing in any organization of meat-cutters, coming from any foreign country, shall be admitted upon presentation of their membership card, without charge.

Moreover, no local union has ever been permitted to charge an initiation fee exceeding five dollars.

In addition to those policies of the international union referred to above, mention should also be made of certain demands urged by the packing-trades councils. These councils have been vigorous in their denunciation of convict labor, wherever the products of such labor is offered in the open market in competition with similar products of other labor. They have agitated child-labor laws, and were among those who urged the adoption of the bill recently enacted by the legislature of Illinois. They have also asked the packers to abolish the present system of paying laborers by the check system. They hold that all laborers should be paid in cash. At present, only one of the big packing-houses in the Chicago Stock Yards uses the cash system.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> It is estimated that more than 95 per cent. of the checks issued to the laborers in the Stock Yards are cashed in saloons. The sign, "Packing-house checks cashed here," is conspicuous in many saloons near the stock yards of the large packing centers. Whenever a saloonkeeper cashes a check, he always retains the odd cents, if there are any. Then, too, custom demands that the man cashing a check shall buy a glass of beer, and if any fellow-workers are present, as is usually the case, the owner of the check is supposed to set up drinks to the crowd, sometimes including the bartender. Even more important than this to the saloonkeepers is their use of a credit system, made possible under the check-payment plan. The saloonkeepers learn the amount of wages paid their patrons. The drinks are then sold on credit, the amount being gauged in some proportion to the size of the laborer's check. When the check is brought in to be cashed, the saloonkeeper deducts the amount due him and turns over the balance. The saloonkeeper is enabled to make much greater sales under such a plan than he could where the cash system is used. This is well illustrated by conditions in Kansas City, Kan., five years ago. While Kansas has a prohibition law, no attempt was made to enforce it in Kansas City at that time. All the packers were asked to abolish the check system. The "S. & S." company agreed to pay their laborers in non-negotiable orders drawn on a certain bank located near their packing-houses. This, of course, made it impossible for the laborers to cash their checks at any other place than the bank on which the checks were drawn. The officials of this bank agreed to keep their offices open on the evenings of each pay-day. The saloonkeepers around the "S. & S." packing-houses immediately raised a protest. One of them told an official of the butchers' union that the new system would drive him out of business. He explained that he had several hundred dollars due him for drinks credited during the week. Not being given

the opportunity to cash the checks, he would be unable to collect more than a fraction of this, and could not think of extending credit in the future as he had heretofore. He affirmed that it would not pay for him to try to run his saloon under a cash system. It is a well-known fact that several saloonkeepers moved away from the vicinity of the "S. & S." houses after the above-mentioned change was made.

On Ashland Avenue, near the Chicago Stock Yards, the saloonkeepers get in most of their money today indirectly by the cashing of checks. Here the saloonkeepers are largely ex-employees in the Stock Yards, each of which has his circle of friends from "packing-house" days. These men make nearly all their money on beer sales, that being the customary drink. Of the wholesale houses, the breweries do most of the business with these saloons, and therefore take the greatest interest in the saloon traffic of this region. It is not uncommon for saloonkeepers to have money advanced them by breweries in order that they may be able to cash the checks that come in. Brewery companies own many of the saloons and are the owners of the fixtures in nearly all the saloons on Ashland Avenue, north of Forty-seventh Street. That the saloon traffic pays in this region is evident from the number of saloons. In one block on Ashland Avenue where there are thirteen buildings, all are saloons except one. Moreover, since the license was raised, last spring, from five hundred to one thousand dollars, practically none of the saloons in the above territory have gone out of business.